



Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

Committee/Council/Other: Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes No.: 8– AY 2022-2023	
Date of Meeting: June 1, 2023	Start Time: 9:00 AM
Location: Virtual (MS Teams)	End Time: 10:30 AM
Chair: Dr. Fathia Elmenghawi	Minutes Recorded By: Dr. Fathia Elmenghawi
Attendees:	
1. Prof. Stephen Wilhite	Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Success / Provost
2. Dr. Eka Sediadi	Architecture
3. Dr. Sara Faiz Hanna Tasfy	Chemical and Petroleum Engineering
4. Dr. Fayez Moutassem	Civil and Infrastructure Engineering
5. Dr. Mohammed Awad	Computer Science and Engineering
6. Dr. Maissa Farhat	Electrical, Electronics & Communication Engineering
7. Dr. Haileslasie Tadele	Finance
8. Dr. Kutbettin Kilic	Humanities and Social Sciences
9. Dr. Abdelfatah Arman	Management
10. Dr. Kadhim Al Amara	Mechanical & Industrial Engineering
11. Mr. Kevin Konecny	University Administration
12. Engr. Wlla Mhairat	Instructor
Excused Absences:	
Dr Rawad Hodeify	Biotechnology
Dr. Khaleda Almansoori	Graduate Studies
Prof. Suleyman Ulusoy	Mathematics and Natural Sciences
Unexcused Absences:	
Ms. Zainab Usman Abubakar	Graduate Students representative
Ms. Urita Sadallah	SGA Representative
Guests:	
1) AGENDA ITEM 1: Approving the minutes of the previous meeting (meeting #7 AY 22-23).	
Discussion Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr. Fathia asked the FS members if they have any comments about the minutes of the previous meeting.• After hearing non from the members, Dr. Fathia called for a motion to approve Faculty Senate Meeting #7.• Motion to approve the MoM # 7 was raised by Dr. Sara and seconded by Dr. Fayez.	
Conclusions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The 7th MoM has been approved.	

- The approved minutes will be posted on the AURAK website.

2) **AGENDA ITEM 2:** Follow up and updates about previous meetings agenda items:

- Faculty end of contract procedures and timing & Proposal for faculty promotion ceremony (update from Dr. Sara and Mr. Kevin)
- Online course evaluation (update from Dr. Awad)
- Gym membership waiver status
- Provost meeting with Mr. Abba Tahir regarding salary increase status for faculty hired during COVID-19
- From MoM # 8 AY 21-22 *"The collaboration between AURAK and RAK Academy & Saint James for the next coming years in terms of mutual tuition fee discounts."*

Discussion Summary:

- Regarding the previous meeting agenda, mentioned below are the updates:
- After discussing with Mr. Abba about faculty end of contract procedures and timing & Proposal for faculty promotion ceremony, Dr. Sara said:
 - ❖ Her committee updated that the mentioning about end of contract procedures was only in faculty contract, therefore there is no policy that specify end of contract procedure.
 - ❖ Regarding the renewal of contract, as per the procedure if the faculty contract renewal is approved then it will be notified to faculty 6 months prior to the end of the contract.
 - ❖ If the provost decision is not to renew the contract of the faculty, then there is no mention of the period. The committee discussed this procedure with Mr. Abba and suggested to make a change, if the contract of the faculty is not getting renewed then through an organized meeting of faculty with provost should be arranged seven months prior to the expiration of the contract. Then the faculty will have one week to appeal the decision to the president.
 - ❖ The committee also suggested to reduce the period for the contract renewal application review and evaluation through reducing the period for the provost's decision from 4 weeks to 3 weeks.
 - ❖ Committee also suggested that instead of allowing the faculty to apply 10 months prior to the expiration of contract, it can be made to 11 months to give more time to faculty to apply and will give provost the period of 4 weeks to review as well.
 - ❖ For proposal of faculty promotion ceremony, Dr. Sara suggested that this ceremony can be included in President awards ceremony which is conducted at the end of academic year. Prof. Stephen agreed to it.
 - ❖ Dr. Fathia suggested to include the names of faculties in President awards ceremony who are leaving/left AURAK in that academic year
- Regarding online course evaluation, Dr. Awad had discussed this with IT committee, the provost, Mr. Kevin and Ms. Amanda about students who committed an integrity violation, plagiarism, cheating and students who were reported. Also, he discussed about the process of how students can be banned from conducting the student evaluation survey. This ban will be implemented from next semester.
- Regarding Gym membership waiver status,
 - ❖ Dr. Abdelfatah said that it was approved by Mr. Basheer and asked Mr. Kevin about the update regarding occupancy in the gym.
 - ❖ Mr. Kevin said after discussing with Mr. Basheer, they acknowledged that gym requires more staff to assist in workouts and for safety reasons. This may take time as there will be a budget

issue. Mr. Kevin will discuss this with the provost and give an update in the next senate meeting.

- Regarding the provost meeting with Mr. Abba about salary increase status for faculty hired during COVID-19, Prof. Stephen mentioned that the restoration of salary reduction for faculties has had a significant impact on the budget for next year and its not possible to get preliminary approval from the government for a further increase in personnel line in this budget. However, AURAK is hiring a consultant to do a comprehensive study of AURAK salaries and benefits compared to competitor institutions in the UAE and make a report to the administration and the board. So, the provost is hopeful that the report will be useful but also cautious as RAK government is showing limited willingness to further increase the subsidy provided to the university and continuous to put pressure to reduce that subsidy.
- Regarding the collaboration between AURAK and RAK Academy & Saint James for the next coming years in terms of mutual tuition fee discounts, Prof. Stephen said that this needs to wait and to be discussed in next meeting as President's office is undertaking a systematic review of all our MOUs with the schools.

Conclusions:

- Dr. Fathia will send the suggestions by Dr. Sara and committee to the provost office to be discussed in Provost council meeting.
- The president award ceremony will now recognize the category of faculty promotion and also acknowledge the faculties who are leaving/left in that academic year.
- Mr. Kevin will provide an update in the next meeting on increasing gym staff to make it accessible for more people.
- Prof. Stephen mentioned that collaboration between AURAK and RAK Academy & Saint James will be discussed in the next Senate meeting.

3) AGENDA ITEM 3: Students chairs and tables in building H and K. (Mr. Ibrahim)

Discussion Summary:

- Dr. Fathia mentioned that Mr. Ibrahim will not be able to join and Engr. Basheer has left AURAK so no one could join on behalf of them therefore this will be the agenda for the next academic year meeting.

Conclusions:

- Dr. Fathia will send the inquiry to facilities and "Students chairs and tables in building H and K" will be the part of next academic year meeting agenda.

4) AGENDA ITEM 4: Final grade release

Discussion Summary:

- Dr. Fathia mentioned that there are still some faculties complaining about final grade release even after discussing it with Mr. Rania in a previous meeting.
- Dr. Fayez informed that while computing the final exams, students come to faculties requesting to increase their grades no matter how much they receive, this can be a distraction to the faculty as they are busy grading the exams as well as a distraction for students as they will not be able to focus on their remaining exams. Therefore, Dr. Fayez emphasized on releasing the grades on a fixed date.

- Dr. Sara pointed that the system has already been updated to not release the student's grade as her students did not receive any grades. Dr. Fayez replied that many students came to his office to change the grade.
- Dr. Abdelfatah suggested to not increase the grades of students upon direct request so they will slowly stop requesting for grade change.
- Dr. Fathia mentioned that if they want to appeal for grade change then they can go through AURAK official channel of grade change instead of directly requesting the faculty.
- Dr. Awad identified Dr. Fayez and Dr. Sara's issue and mentioned that students found loopholes to check their grades before grade release which is why some students knew their grades early, now IT have rectified those loopholes and closed it for the students.
- Prof. Stephen also highlighted that student are not supposed to have access to blackboard until grades are released but later, they should have an access to it after grade release but he received complaints from few students that they cannot access the blackboard even after grade release. This will be discussed with Mr. Danilo by him and update will be provided in next senate meeting.
- Dr. Kadhim suggested that instead of making many steps for the grade release and involving IT the faculty can be advised to release grade on one same day. Dr. Awad replied that faculties are suppose to grade the students within 48 hours and these grades are been posted by registrar on the grade release date, due to this system there are certain steps taken to hide the grades from students until the release date.
- Dr. Abdelfatah mentioned that this process should be transparent to the students and they must know how they are being graded and what they missed.

Conclusions:

- Dr. Fathia concluded that a systematic way is to be implemented by all faculties and in order to prevent students accessing the grades or final grades at least during the exam times.

5) AGENDA ITEM 5: TurnItIn software subscription (Dr. Kutbettin)

Discussion Summary:

- Dr. Kutbettin highlighted that there are many AI apps which are big challenge to writing intensive courses and unfortunately software at our disposal 'SafeAssign' cannot detect the AI work that is why TurnItIn is better product in terms of detecting AI work.
- Prof. Stephen said that he is fully supportive for purchasing superior tools such as TurnItIn or other plagiarism detecting tools. He mentioned that the reason AURAK uses SafeAssign is it is an integral part of Blackboard. The only concern here is if the TurnItIn software is mentioned in the IT budget to purchase in the coming academic year or not.

Conclusions:

- Dr. Fathia mentioned that she will communicate with IT and give an update in the next academic year senate meeting.

6) AGENDA ITEM 6: Class size procedure (Dr. Kutbettin)

Discussion Summary:

- Dr. Kutbettin showed concern about large classes which causes challenge in many ways as the screens are small and students at the back cannot hear the faculty clearly and cannot perform group activities together and some of the classes are part of writing intensive courses which makes it difficult for faculties to give quality feedback to the students.
- Dr. Maissa agreed with Dr. Kutbettin and suggested to make better classes for large number of students.
- Dr. Fathia suggested if auditorium can be used to conduct such large classes.
- Prof. Stephen said that building K was intentionally designed to accommodate large number of students but they are not large enough to accommodate 80 or more students. This can be discussed with Mr. Tawfiq by inviting him in next senate meeting but in the meantime the provost council will discuss these issues with General Education Committee.

Conclusions:

- This agenda will be raised as follow up item in the next academic year senate meeting with Mr. Tawfiq.

7) AGENDA ITEM 7: Other business.

Discussion Summary:

- There was no other business.

Conclusions:

- The meeting was concluded.

Attachments: NA

Date of Next Meeting: TBA

Time: TBA

Place: TBA

Chair's Signature:



Rapporteur's Signature: *Himankshi Chudasama*

Distribution List:

- Provost
- Faculty Senate Members
- Guests